

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6831
DEA HQS WASHDC

S E C R E T BOGOTA 2325

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: INQUIRY ON USE BY TURBAY OF DIPLOMATIC POUCH FOR
NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING

1. IN BACKGROUND INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR MAR 9, TIMOTHY ROSS, ABC CORRESPONDENT AND STRINGER FOR NEW YORK TIMES, ASKED ABOUT THE REPORT FROM "THE GARCIA CASE IN NEW YORK" THAT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TURBAY-AYALA HAD USED THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH FOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WHILE HE WAS COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED IN TERMS ALREADY USED IN THE INTERVIEW TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE ARE MANY RUMORS ABOUT TURBAY'S UNSAVORY ASSOCIATIONS AND PAST ACTIONS, BUT IF THERE WERE HARD EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE SURFACED IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ROSS APPEARED SATISFIED AND DID NOT PRESS THE QUESTION FURTHER.

2. OTHER NEWSMEN AT THE INTERVIEW WERE RAFAEL BERMUDEZ AND ALFONSO CHARDY, THE LOCAL UPI AND AP CHIEFS RESPECTIVELY. ALL THREE NEWSMEN ARE PREPARING STORIES ON THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS ALLEGATION AGAINST TURBAY COULD APPEAR IN THE STORIES, ALTHOUGH BERMUDEZ AND CHARDY EXHIBITED NO PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE QUESTION.

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3. THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THIS SUBJECT AT POST IS LIMITED TO A DEA DOCUMENT CLASSIFIED "SECRET" WHICH LISTS REPORTS FROM TWO SOURCES. THE FIRST IS FROM A WEST GERMAN CITIZEN ARRESTED IN NEW YORK IN 1976 WHO SAID HE HAD KNOWLEDGE OF A COCAINE SMUGGLING GROUP HEADED BY FERNANDO GARCIA, AND THAT ACCORDING TO GARCIA, TURBAY HAD FACILITATED

THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR COCAINE TRANSACTIONS WHILE ACTING AS AMBASSADOR. THE SECOND SOURCE WAS A U.S. CUSTOMS DOCUMENT REPORTING AN ALLEGATION THAT TURBAY WAS RECEIVING 50-75 KILOS OF COCAINE PER MONTH THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH.

4. ROSS DID NOT GIVE THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION BUT APPEARED TO IMPLY THE CASE WAS WELL- KNOWN OR THAT THE INFORMATION COULD EVEN BE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. THE DEPARTMENT AND DEA ARE REQUESTED TO VERIFY IF ANY SUCH INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. OTHERWISE, THIS APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER LEAK OF EXTREMELY SENSITIVE, BUT UNVERIFIED ALLEGATIONS THAT IF PUBLICIZED COULD ONLY HAVE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA.
ASENCIO

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Message Attributes

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